

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[131] Proper user-to-data associations are maintained in shared spaces created in a peer-to-peer collaborative system by means of a simplified and minimal user interface that permits users to easily authenticate other members of a shared space. In particular, support is provided for automatically building authenticated relationships even if users do not take the time to authenticate other users. When a user enters a shared space and views the contacts in that space, the display names of each contact are accompanied by distinctive icons that identify that authentication status of that contact. A mechanism is provided for resolving conflicts between contacts with the same display names to prevent confusion and contact "spoofing." Security policies can be established to provide a uniform approach to authentication. These policies can be set by a user or, alternatively, the policies can be set by an administrator.